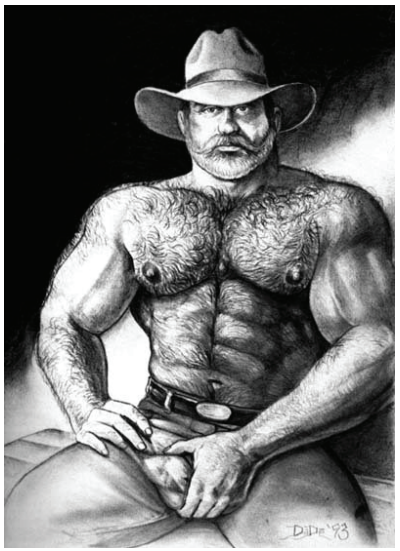

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- two perspectives on the UK student movement, from Glasgow and London
- an anarcho-communist perspective on recent events in Egypt
- thoughts on the Wikileaks saga
- review on the latest Black Kite feminist issue
- an interview with the Melbourne Black collective
- plus oh so much more!!

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MUTINY

A PAPER OF ANARCHISTIC IDEAS & ACTIONS

#58 FEBRUARY/MARCH

TWO ARTICLES!

UPRISING IN EGYPT: HOSSAM EL-HAMALAWY & DAVID PORTER

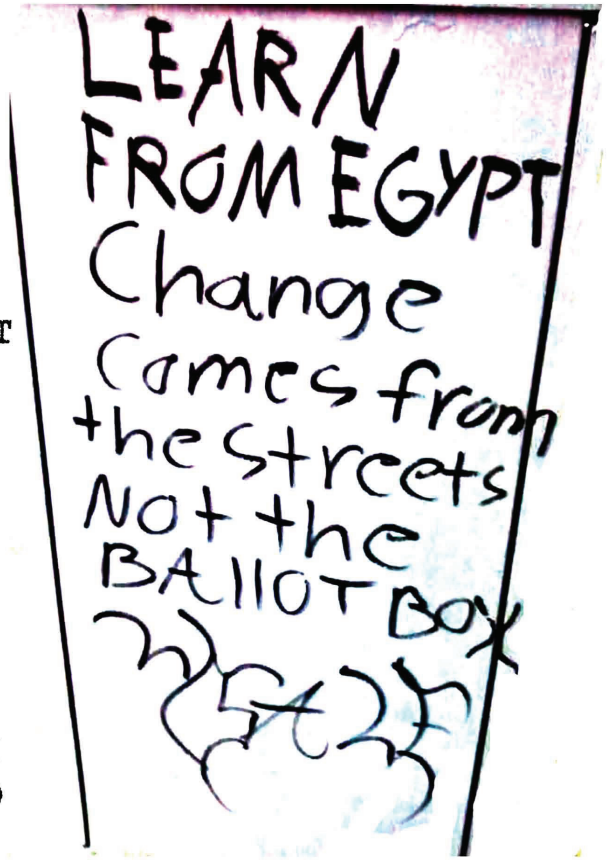
TWO ARTICLES!

THE RADICAL STUDENT MOVEMENT IN EUROPE: LONDON & GLASGOW

NOTES ON THE WIKILEAKS SAGA SO FAR BY SCI_FI

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE COLLECTIVE WHO MAKE MELBOURNE BLACK

& A REVIEW OF BLACK KITE PRESS



FREE ZINE

Editorial

This issue is the first in Mutiny Zine's new bimonthly format. Primarily this change is due to a lack of numbers and a feeling of exhaustion in the collective after putting out a monthly version for five years. However, this new format does have some real benefits. As we now have more time to put out a single issue, we are able to publish a longer zine – look forward to 24 pages of content from now on. This allows us to focus in depth on particular issues – for instance in this zine there is extensive coverage of social movements in Britain. It also gives us more time to organise series of articles – beginning from this issue, we will publish interviews with members of collectives that also distribute radical publications in Australia, to encourage discussion about the nature of such publications and to help increase co-operation between Mutiny and these other groups.

However, Mutiny Zine is definitely still looking for help in order to keep the publication going. We are open to new collective members and contributions of articles or pictures are always very welcome. In future issues of the zine we will publish the second part of an interview with Gabriel Kuhn and Dave Kerin on syndicalism and a critical reflection on Anarchist Summer School by some of its organizers.

Love and solidarity, Mutiny collective .
(editors for this month: The Artist Formerly Known As, Dumpstered Twin, BFG, L Dog, Blackbeard, Syzygy.)

Mutiny is an anarchist collective based in Sydney.
We meet regularly, contact us on
mail: c/- PO Box 4, Enmore, NSW 2042, Australia.
email: mutineers[at] graffit [dot] net
Web: back issues at www.jura.org.au/mutiny.

(The mutiny zine collective does not necessarily agree with all the opinions of contributors. Contributors do not necessarily agree with all the opinions of the mutiny collective. The mutiny collective doesn't agree with all the opinions of the mutiny collective.)

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pertinent questions, a lot can be achieved!

A focus on creating horizontal structures at a minute level was threaded throughout sessions of the ASS (heh heh). If this sounds like a laudable goal, consider that the pretense of such a flat structure denied that anyone was responsible. Thus, absolving anyone who failed to meet their commitments, despite the reasonable assumption that they would. The promise of these workshops attracted a number of us from Melbourne, and their cancellation was disappointing.

This might reflect the origins of ASS (heh heh) and the broader environment movement's focus on organisational form over revolutionary content – more than once I heard someone talk about creating a "decentralised" or "small-scale" space outside (or, more accurately, within) capitalism, as synonymous with anarchism. There is nothing in anarchism that is inherently decentralised or, for that matter, consensus-based and it bugged me to hear it like an article of faith. Especially, without a commitment to the overthrow of capitalism. Maybe that can be my talk at the next conference!

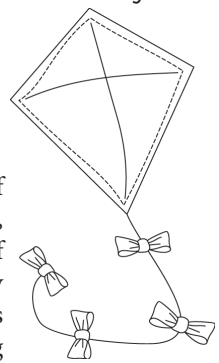
The 'Identity Politics' session had a very good discussion, despite the lack of structure or goal – or because of it. The discussion could have been helped by an agreed definition of identity politics - that which is opposed to a class analysis and organisation - is not compatible with anarchism. Society will not change with cross-class collaboration along the lines of identity. One speaker made an excellent point about the 'autonomy' promoted by revolutionaries being in relation to the working class and capital, and not to each other in relation to identities (I'm paraphrasing here). This was contrasted by some to their positive experiences of being with like-minded people. The confusion of identity with identity politics, while entirely tolerable in an atmosphere of learning, remained unchallenged to keep things, you know, horizontal.

There was also a similar level of great discussion in the 'Worker's Control' session, although I disagreed that anarchists should feel compelled to join a Trades Hall-affiliated union. Neither should we preclude it, but in any case anarchists should unionise! This was unfortunately miscast as some kind of abstentionism (and opposition to "social democratic" unions, although I've never said anything like that). Anyway, dual unionism and rank-and-file participation within existing unions are both strategies employed by anarchists historically is what I was trying to say, just so you know.

I skipped the last day. Wasn't much that grabbed me on the program. For the record, the Apple Store in the city is shit and the Courthouse Hotel in Newtown is overcrowded on Sundays. I'm aware this review sounds more negative than I mean it to be. Take my word that I had fun but I'm constrained by Mutiny's word limits!

One organisational question I would like to tackle in the future is how to make discussion more lively without the reversion to domination by a few people. Overall, I thought it was a great weekend and the organisers met the challenges well and deserve to be thanked. The best parts for me were meeting new people and seeing familiar faces, plus seeing Jura's sweeeeet light-up sign.

Black Kite Quarterly, 1st Edition



by The Artist
Formerly Known As

The first issue of Black Kite Quarterly, a continuation of the Wai Quarterly publication, was themed 'making the world safer for wimmin'. The issue is a jam packed one, including an excerpt from a speech by Andrea Dworkin about ending rape made at the Midwest Regional Conference of the National Organisation for Changing Men in 1983; an article about the 'ladies only' buses in Mexico City, which ponders the question of segregation versus safety; a section written by a number of male allies, around male roles in revolutionary organising; an article on porn and it's male audience within a patriarchal society; plus a bunch of stories of active revolutionary womens' groups from around the world and radical news snippets. The publication attempts to approach the theme in a holistic manner. What I particularly like about this issue of Black Kite Quarterly is that a lot of the writing is grounded in day-to-day struggle, and avoids being overly theoretical, by focusing on a praxis of feminist politics.

Throughout the magazine the editors have chosen to use the spelling 'wimmin' / 'womyn' as "an expression of independence and a rejection of traditions that define wimmin by reference to a male norm". Lately, I've been particularly interested in the separatist feminist roots of this use of spelling, and specifically what that means for a feminism that recognises and celebrates gender diversity and a trans-feminist politic. Whilst I recognise that the use of this spelling is employed by people for many different reasons, I'm unsure that its use doesn't also reflect a hatred towards transgendered people. Food for thought!

Anarchist Summer School, 18th- 20th February, Sydney

by Peter Garrote

That the Anarchist Summer School (ASS) (heh heh) had not exactly been organised by either Jura or Black Rose was a surprise to myself and others in the Melbourne Anarchist Club (MAC), who were very keen to attend. In the introduction the next morning, the organisers explained they were uni students in environment groups and movements involved in a reading group, and the purpose of the event was to condense the reading group for their own benefit, whilst also sharing it with others (did I get that right?). This was different to what I expected, but still an exciting prospect.

The start of the first day was illustrative. The 'Indigenous Struggles in Australia' session did not happen. The 'From Here to Anarchy' workshop was excellent and showed the range of opinions in the room. Neither the speaker or the facilitator turned up for 'Latin American and Indigenous Anarchism' in the next session, which resulted in the room being gripped by paralysis. The apparent fear of being cast as authoritarian kept the ball from rolling, although initiative was taken eventually. In a room of 20 people with keen interest or

Brief News

Sydney

On January 16th, more than 100 people gathered at the Hub in Newtown to protest against racism in the area. Following several community demonstrations against a mural that says, "say no to burqas" at nearby Station Street, the group decided to go to the mural in opposition to this racist statement. Together residents threw paint and pasted anti-racism posters over the mural, made noise and held banners with the statements, "fascists off our streets" and "racists out of Newtown".

Police acted to protect the mural. As people attempted to leave the area together significant numbers of Police continued arriving to the scene. Heavy-handed tactics were used to violently arrest 8 people, and to intimidate and harass everyone present. Police officers were not wearing identification. Witness reports attest to a high level of police aggression, with punches, grabbing people by the neck and threatening to break bones. Charges are being pressed against those arrested and court solidarity will be essential

Sofia, Bulgaria

SOLIDARITY WITH JOCK PALFREEMAN!
Jock Palfreeman is a 23 year old antifascist from Australia currently in prison in Sofia, Bulgaria. He is accused of murder and attempted murder, following an encounter with a group of 16 far-right football hooligans. After 2 years of trial he was sentenced in December 2009 to 20 years imprisonment and forced tp pay a $350 000 fine.

On 22nd February, the appelate court upheld the first court's decision and maintained the 20 year sentence. This despite all the evidence supporting Jock's story. The family will file for a further appeal with the court of Cassation.

Jock would appreciate our support: mail can be sent directly to:
Jock Palfreeman
Sofia Central Prison
21 General Stoletov Boulevard
Sofia 1309, BULGARIA

Greece

Keratea, Attica: on February 8 1,000 people besieged the local police station after riot police stormed houses indiscriminately.

The struggle of locals in the area against the construction of a landfill in their area has been going since December 12 last year. Near-daily clashes of the locals with the riot police occupying the site of the planned landfill took a new twist when riot police stormed the town itself, breaking into houses. They arrested at least one 30-year resident who, according to the locals, has been entirely uninvolved in the clashes. According to the ex-mayor of Keratea, the mother of the man had a heart attack after watching her son being arrested.

More than 1,000 enraged locals besieged the local police station, hurling stones, sticks

and molotov cocktails at the police guarding it. A local described the scene as reminiscent of the civil war.

Also in Greece: All of the Thessaloniki 4 are free! The four comrades, including UK anarchist Simon Chapman, have been found not guilty in a Greek court of all (except one minor charge) of the charges going back to the EU Summit protests and riots in Thessaloniki in 2003.

All four of the defendants are free. All the initial charges were dropped apart from distinguished defiance of authority which was then reduced to a minor defiance of authority. This is a misdemeanor, carrying a 6-month suspended sentence, but none of the arrested will be imprisoned unless of course someone is charged again during these six months. This was the best the juries could ever do, since they had to be charged of something, in order to justify the six months they had spent in prison back in 2003.

BERLIN

On January 2nd The Pankow women's prison was attacked by around 15-20 people in ski masks, who drew graffiti on the front wall, exploding fireworks, kicking the main door and breaking a window. In the same evening, 8 masked men threw cobblestones, paint bombs and two petrol bombs at a police station in central Berlin. The flames were quickly extinguished by police officers. Fires had also been started in nearby streets. Police have attributed the actions to anarchists and had been checking claims of responsibility on an anarchist website. The actions were assumed the have a political motive.

Also in Berlin on January 30th, A demonstration against the eviction of Liebig 14, the alternative housing project in Berlin, was followed by heavy riots. Around 2,000 people marched from Kreuzberg to Liebig Strasse / Rigaer Strasse, with many attacking police with stones. Around 40 were injured and 17 of the protestors were arrested. This protest followed a demonstration held on the evening before, against the International Police Summit in Berlin, in which 3 federal police cars were smashed.

Anarchist stalls blitz Sydney by Jeremy

In the last 3 months 20 anarchists from Jura, Black Rose, Mutiny and other collectives worked together to set up 16 stalls across Sydney. This was an amazingly significant project. We gave away over 5,000 leaflets on anarchism and had hundreds of conversations with interested people.

We covered our community from West to East (Blue Mountains, Parramatta, Leichhardt, Glebe, Newtown, Sydney City, and Redfern) and from South to North (Hurstville, Cabramatta, Bankstown, Chatswood, and Climate Camp in the Hunter Valley). Each stall had banners and posters (and sometimes music) around it and lasted about 4 hours.

The leaflet we handed out was direct and honest - the title reads 'Why Anarchism'. It gives a basic introduction to anarchism and some of Sydney's anarchist spaces and collectives, plus web links to more info. As we gave people the leaflet we said 'Leaflet on anarchism' - so they knew what they were taking. We also gave away leaflets on the Breakout conference, loads of Mutiny zines, and other free stuff.

We sold $1288 worth of anarchist material - over 100 books and pamphlets, plus badges and patches. Top sellers included Chomsky, Crimethinc, Zinn, Slingshot organisers, and 'How to Make Trouble and Influence People'.

The response was inspiring. Hundreds of people stopped to chat - often to passionately agree with what we were saying. (Only occasionally to passionately disagree.) Many people were surprised to meet 'real live anarchists', and were wary at first, but after some conversation agreed that we had some good ideas - and an unfortunate reputation in their view. Each area was different - in Newtown people were friendly but blasé, out west people engaged with genuine interest, on the North Shore some were shocked but the other sympathetic people had money to buy lots of books!

Why was this project so significant? Because anarchists in Sydney virtually NEVER reach out in this direct, face-to-face way. We stay in our spaces and complain that people don't come to visit us. We dress funny and avoid talking to people about politics, except people who already agree with us. But this time we went out and engaged face-to-face with thousands of people where they were at. We had in-depth conversations about anarchism with hundreds. It was scary and hard work, but we did it. Even if only 1 in 10 actually think about the interaction they had, that's 500 people thinking about anarchism. If only 1 in 10 is inspired by what they've heard, we've changed 50 people's lives.

It's not complicated. This is what we need to do to build a social movement capable of revolution. We know how, we just don't like to do the hard work. Talking to people where they're at is a challenge. But that's why they call it 'struggle' comrades. We know we can do it - so let's keep going.

JP: Oh, shit. But I think that we are trying to honestly report on the activism that we are involved in. At the moment we're involved in these very different projects. If you look inside the zine you'll notice that it's really heterogeneous, people write about very different things, people who are working with us will have very different interests. So I guess there's not a lot on the big issues.

MZ: It's ok if you don't want to answer this, but do you have any thoughts on the strengths and weaknesses of Melbourne Black?

JP: Ok, I guess I'll fess up. I think certainly in relation to these Trotskyist papers, initially we tried too hard to set ourselves apart from them. Problems need to be pointed out, but I think the defensive attitude that came out in the first couple of issues wasn't very helpful. As I said earlier as well, the scale of the project had to be modified as we went through it, so we had to learn how to be a bit more realistic. And I guess the biggest problem for me is knowing whether or not we are fulfilling a need. When you write something and print it off and you drop it off in a dozen places, it can feel really self-indulgent. It can feel like 'this is what I think and what I think is important, so therefore you should listen to me'. So we have to sort of watch what's going on around us to see if we are talking about things that people are actually interested in. And I guess that's why our distribution method is by word-of-mouth and hand-to-hand, because usually the people for whom it is actually useful are people who we end up working on projects with. Quite a few of us were very involved in the LASNET conference, and so when we were talking to people about the LASNET conference often it was easy to hand them a copy of Melbourne Black. It's like, this is something that we're writing on the side that happens to talk about this. Once again, I guess the idea that we're being generally useful (to every possible group on the left - Eds), that's just not going to happen! I guess we have to reconcile ourselves to the idea that we're just a couple of people, having a couple of conversations, with a couple of other people. But as long as there are lots of those conversations and lots of other people are having their own conversations, that's a role I'm comfortable with.

MZ: Do you have any thoughts on collaboration with the different zines and journals that are sprouting up around Australia?

JP: I think we should be looking at forming some kind of federation. I think that's a real possibility. That means we'd be able to put on a conference, to try and compare and contrast different styles, but also distribute each other's publications. Like I said it's about talking to each other.

MZ: We might have some differences, but that's not necessarily a problem.

JP: I think we might have lots of differences, and maybe only little bits in common but it's those little bits in common that are more important than the differences. Well the differences are important too - it's all important!

MZ: Anything else?

JP: Yeah. I just want to say that for me this whole thing has been an experiment. I'm a super, super casual worker of the education industry, so I first approached this publication as a project in radical education. That is, the idea that you should first reflect on the world so you can then move on to transform it. And I've been learning constantly along the way. It's been part of my struggle as a proletarian to claim the products of my labour. So it's been liberating. And I would say to anyone who's thinking about starting something, but isn't sure, just do it! If you put out a few issues and you decide you hate it, that's fine. But I think you'll find it easier than you think it is, it's more worthwhile than you think it is and we'd love to hear from you. So if anyone reads this and thinks yes I'm going to start a zine today, please send us a copy!

Perspectives on the uprising in Egypt

The workers, middle class, military junta and the permanent revolution

by Hossam el-Hamalawy

This article was written on February 12th. For more recent updates, visit the author's blog at http://www.arabawy.org/blog/

Since yesterday, and actually earlier, middle class activists have been urging Egyptians to suspend the protests and return to work, in the name of patriotism, singing some of the most ridiculous lullabies about "let's build new Egypt," "Let's work harder than even before," etcetera. In case you didn't know, Egyptians are actually among the hardest working people in the globe already. Those activists want us to trust Mubarak's generals with the transition to democracy– the same junta that has provided the backbone of his dictatorship over the past 30 years. And while I believe the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, who receive $1.3 billion annually from the US, will eventually engineer the transition to a "civilian" government, I have no doubt it will be a government that will guarantee the continuation of a system that will never touch the army's privileges, keep the armed forces as the institution that will have the final say in politics (like for example Turkey), and guarantee Egypt will continue to follow US foreign policy whether it's the undesired peace with Apartheid State of Israel, safe passage for the US navy in the Suez Canal, or the continuation of the Gaza siege and exports of natural gas to Israel at subsidized rates. The "civilian" government is not about cabinet members who do not wear military uniforms. A civilian government means a government that fully represents the Egyptian people's demands and desires without any intervention from the brass. And I see this [as] hard to be accomplished, or allowed, by the junta. The military has been the ruling institution in this country since 1952. Its leaders are part of the establishment. And while the young officers and soldiers are our allies, we cannot for one second lend our trust and confidence to the generals. Moreover, those army leaders need to be investigated. I want to know more about their involvement in the business sector. All classes in Egypt took part in the uprising. In Tahrir Square you found

sons and daughters of the Egyptian elite, together with the workers, middle class citizens, and the urban poor. Mubarak has managed to alienate all social classes in society including wide sections of the bourgeoisie. But remember that it's only when the mass strikes started three days ago that the regime started crumbling and the army had to force Mubarak to resign because the system was about to collapse. Some have been surprised that the workers started striking. I really don't know what to say. The workers have been staging the longest and most sustained strike wave in Egypt's history since 1946, triggered by the Mahalla strike in December 2006. It's not the workers' fault that you were not paying attention to their news. Every single day over the past three years there was a strike in some factory, in Cairo or the provinces. These strikes were not just economic, they were also political in nature. From day 1 of our uprising, the working class has been taking part in the protests. Who do you think were the protesters in Mahalla, Suez and Kafr el-Dawwar for example? However, the workers were taking part as "demonstrators" and not necessarily as "workers"– meaning, they were not moving independently. The government had brought the economy to a halt, not the protesters, through its curfew and shutting down of banks and business. It was a capitalist strike, aiming at terrorizing the Egyptian people. Only when the government tried to bring the country back to "normal" on Sunday did workers return to their factories, discuss the current situation, and start to organize en masse, moving as a block. The strikes waged by the workers this week were both economic and political fused together. In some of the locations the workers did not list the regime's fall among their demands, but they used the same slogans as those protesting in Tahrir and in many cases […] the workers put forward a list of political demands in solidarity with the revolution. These workers are not going home anytime soon. They started strikes because they couldn't feed their families anymore. They have been emboldened by Mubarak's overthrow, and cannot go back to their children and tell them that the army has promised to bring them food and their rights in I don't know how many months. Many of the strikers have already started raising additional demands of establishing free trade unions away from the corrupt, state-backed Egyptian Federation of Trade Unions. Today, I've already started receiving news that thousands of Public Transport workers are staging protests in el-Gabal el-Ahmar. The temporary workers at Helwan Steel Mills are also protesting. The Railway technicians continue to bring trains to a halt. Thousands of el-Hawamdiya Sugar Factory [workers] are protesting and oil workers will start a strike tomorrow over economic demands and also to impeach Minister Sameh Fahmy and halt gas exports to Israel. And more reports are coming from other industrial centers. At this point, the Tahrir Square occupation is likely to be suspended. But we have to take Tahrir to the factories now. As the revolution proceeds an inevitable class polarization is [bound] to happen. We have to be vigilant. We shouldn't stop here… We hold the keys to the liberation of the entire region, not just Egypt… Onwards with a permanent revolution that will empower the people of this country with direct democracy from below.

Left get their hands on them. We put them online. We've had requests to deliver them to some weird places, like Indonesia. People want to read them there. So I guess just like we're not speaking for the entire Left, we have to resign ourselves to the fact that we're not speaking to the entire Left. I see it as a form of having a conversation.

MZ: Do you have any criteria that determine what kind of articles you prioritise? It looks like initially there was a local focus.

JP: Yeah. We started with an extremely local focus and an extremely anarchistic focus. Now we look a lot more globally, because the projects we are involved in are globalised projects. And the strict anarchist ideology is breaking down a bit. In fact in the last issue the editorial gave a definition of libertarian communism. Even that definition shouldn't be taken too seriously because the decision-making was done on an interpersonal basis. Which isn't to say new people shouldn't get involved, it would be lovely if there were new people. But because it's [the aims of Melbourne Black -Eds] always being negotiated from issue to issue to issue I think every time we try and say exactly what the project is we prove ourselves wrong in the next issue.

MZ: Isn't that an inherent difficulty of this kind of project?

JP: Yeah. I suppose the criteria for what we publish is what we think is important. So it's totally subjective.

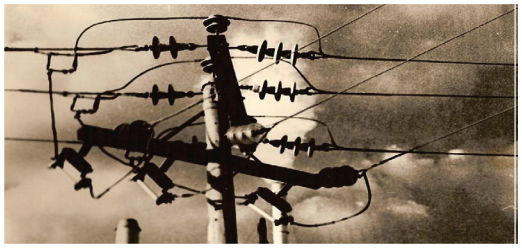
MZ: Have you tried to do much reportage on current events? That's something that we've tried to do and sometimes struggled with in Mutiny Zine, providing commentary and critical discussion on events that are going on right now in a way that is useful for movements.

JP: I did write some stuff on very current events but I don't think anyone read it! It was either in issue 2 or 3, I think over a couple of issues I was following very closely the development of government education policy. That's not something that too many people on the Left give a shit about so it seemed worth writing about! Certainly our coverage of LASNET (the Latin American Solidarity Network that is primarily based in Melbourne – Eds) and the Columbia situation, that's all very current. Our last issue, no. 4 (now no.5 is out -Eds), had a lot on very recent developments with some of our comrades in Columbia. The articles on Indonesia are very recent and we've done some coverage of protests and events held by other people on the Left. We try, even when we fail, to be engaged in that community. But yeah, I think because publishing deadlines are sometimes delayed by a thousand things, it's hard to be current in a way that a daily newspaper can be current - which have more resources and a tighter schedule. So we can be current, but kind of in the medium term, like around what's going on over the course of several months. That's how I think we can be current.

MZ: One aspect that differentiates Mutiny Zine from the socialist publications is that the content in those publications can often be variations of the same theme. So Socialist Alternative has something on this issue and then Green Left Weekly has their version of the same event. But we've tried to fill gaps and cover issues that no one's talking about, it seems like Melbourne Black is trying to take a similar approach. That's not a sectarian thing, it's more that we think that lots of other issues are important and that no one else is covering them.

JP: Yeah sure. We struggle with the question of whether we should always be covering the hot issues. I tend to lean towards no. I see that kind of chasing after hot issues as a recruiting tool, which is one problem with those parties. I don't mean that to be sectarian, there are problems with our organisations as well. I won't tell you what they are.

MZ: That's my next question!



From this issue onwards, Mutiny Zine will publish interviews with members of collectives that also distribute radical publications in Australia. We hope this will encourage discussion about the experiences, strengths and weaknesses of such publications and help increase co-operation between Mutiny and these other groups. Encouragingly, there has been a considerable increase in the number of these kinds of publications over the last year...

The first of these is with James Pollard, an editor of Melbourne Black - http://melbourneblack.wordpress.com/. We caught up with him while he was in Sydney in late November last year. His views shouldn't be taken as being entirely representative of the whole Melbourne Black collective. Small edits have been made to the transcript for the sake of clarity.

Mutiny Zine (MZ): Why did you guys decide to start Melbourne Black?

James Pollard (JP): I think the feeling was that grassroots organisations needed an organ both to communicate to the general public, but also to communicate between one another. Also, we felt that critical reflection is a necessary part of social activism.

MZ: Was it difficult to gain the resources necessary to put out a publication, in terms of printing and people for lay-out and so on? I guess it's easy to have a lot of enthusiasm for the first issue but after time that might wane.

JP: Yeah. In terms of material resources we have a very low operating budget so that's not a problem for us. We have a shoestring budget and we get by on that. The human resources are a bit harder to get. The work of formatting it, because we have a certain standard that we like to present it, that's a lot of work. So we had one lay-out guy, Lumps, for a long-time but then for various reasons, including the amount of work, he had to resign that position and so now Mike does that stuff. Also one thing that was revealed to us was that our hope for this to represent an extremely broad range of the Left hasn't quite come true.

MZ: Go on.

JP: Like I said most of the resource problems we have are in terms of getting people to write. And I think what we've had do is to resign ourselves to the fact that, contrary to our hopes to represent an extremely broad section of the grassroots movements, we speak for ourselves. We write from our own experience. I think that's a much more honest thing to do. So it's actually very encouraging for me to see more and more publications popping up, because even though we can't create one publication where everyone will write and which everyone will use to communicate, I think publications that exist, like ours and like yours, help inspire other people to do the same thing and I think that's very good.

MZ: Has distribution been an issue for Melbourne Black?

JP: We distribute in a really patchy way. We tend to give them out as gifts when we meet someone. We've got people in Sydney I think.

MZ: I haven't seen many around.

JP: Ok, probably we haven't got people in Sydney! We drop them off around Melbourne so that people in the Melbourne

On "Leaderless Revolutions" and the Fall of Mubarak

By David Porter

taken from Z Net - http://www.zcommunications.org/znet

"Leaderless revolutions," as seen currently in North Africa, pose important challenges to outside media and to foreigners, generally, seeking authoritative voices to clarify the picture of fast-moving events. But genuine revolutions are made from below, with the myriad energies and objectives of hundreds of thousands or millions coalescing at least around certain fundamental demands. Time-constrained and impatient foreign journalists and audiences, dependent on fast analyses by the usual hierarchical menu of "experts" and political leaders, naturally resist an arduous process of grassroots inquiry.

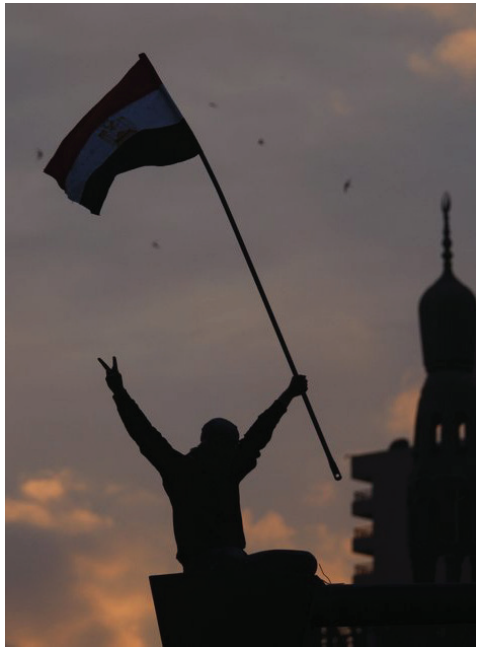
Yet it is at the grassroots level and not simply in the media focus of Tahrir Square where the intense frustration, despair and rage has accumulated for years. It not the more abstract models and formulas of the political class that provide the essential building blocks of genuine revolution from below.

It is the slowly-accumulating momentum of hundreds of thousands of confrontations with local officials and elites, the organizing efforts of mutual assistance (including even Egyptian soccer clubs, as Dave Zirin points out), individual and group assertions of women's rights, tireless attempts to solidify common stands of workers against bosses (as in the great waves of strikes in the textile city of Mahalla), students' rejection of authoritarian school conditions, and efforts to defend local neighborhoods— almost always in the shadows out of sight of foreign media—that slowly develop the courage, confidence and essential horizontal networks bubbling below the surface of seemingly fixed political landscapes.

The sense of solidarity and community (and at least some partial small-scale victories) from local contexts gradually expands to awareness of similar struggles elsewhere and personal ties of trust and common objectives. At these local levels, responding to daily oppressive contexts, it is the individual decisions—often spontaneous—to resist instead of submit, small revolutions at the personal and community level, that accumulate over time into deeper and deeper determination to challenge ever-broader elements of the existing regime. Essentially, these are the true "leaders" of the revolution.

Without that growing accumulation of willful resistance by hundreds of thousands already at the grassroots level, no appeals by Twitter or Facebook, by liberal, radical or revolutionary organizations, or by charismatic national figures will inspire millions to risk the bloodshed and torture implied in confrontation with the harsh face of the regime's police. Without large numbers already willing to take such risks, the hundreds of thousands or millions of previous bystanders would not dare to then express their own deeper feelings of alienation, resentment and rage. In turn, at a certain stage, the open use of repression by the regime, as with the pro-

Mubarak thugs last week, simply fuels even greater rage and mass participation. When suddenly massive resistance declares itself in huge demonstrations, participants experience an unparalleled exuberance of community and utopian egalitarianism. These are the sentiments we've heard commonly expressed in Cairo and other cities in Egypt. These are the same feelings experienced in Paris in 1968, in Prague in 1989 and other revolutionary contexts. Even in non-revolutionary situations, as in the great civil rights and antiwar marches of the 60s in the United States, the same festive atmosphere of great hope and solidarity could be felt.



While the human face of the oppressive regime—as Mubarak in Egypt, Ben Ali in Tunisia and Bouteflika in Algiers—is despised with good reason on its own, such targets also symbolize a wide and deep range of grievances that extend from national- level organs of the state and military down to local-level daily humiliations of officials' contempt, bosses' exploitation, mistreatment of students and women's exclusion from the workplace and political life. These are the larger realities of the existing "regime" of oppression. And this much larger dimension of grassroots revolution poses a whole other question of "leadership." When certain "spokespeople" for the movement or independent "power brokers" become fixed in place—encouraged by negotiators for the old regime or by the media or by their own self-promotion—it is doubtful that those deep levels of revolutionary aspirations will be heard. This will be a key dynamic to watch in Egypt in the weeks to come.

When only the head of state like Mubarak, his cabinet, his ruling party or a few military leaders are discarded, when even a constitution is re-designed or replaced to allow greater representation, such changes rarely go deep enough to affect the realities of oppression in people's daily lives. Understandably, there is genuine immediate relief from previous regime brutality and an opened atmosphere for free expression. These are great accomplishments by the Egyptian people. But if the hierarchical logics of capitalist economics, liberal democracy, dominant foreign powers and social exploitation such as sexism remain in place, a political revolution has only partially succeeded. Much of the old regime remains. Those millions of Egyptian "leaders" who have tasted the exuberant possibilities of utopian community, however briefly, will now confront the realities of resuming their long resistance struggles for lives of freedom and dignity.

Hall rallies feature Assange's face and the words "SUPPORT JULIAN ASSANGE". It seems that people still need figureheads and heroes so badly that they'll find one in the form of a possible rapist.

It is worth mentioning a point made, albeit extremely clumsily, by Naomi Wolf: the rape allegations against Assange were around since August 2010, but it was only after the dramatic 'cablegate' leaks of US diplomatic cables that Interpol drastically stepped up its pursuit of him – a chain of events which looks decidedly conspiratorial. If every rape case was pursued with such enthusiasm and power, it's possible I'd feel a little differently about the legal system.

The other thing that the WikiLeaks saga really brought out into the open for a lot of people is the depth of co-operation between capital and the state. I'm referring here to Mastercard and PayPal openly refusing to process financial donations made to WikiLeaks, or in the case of ubiquitous web giant Amazon, their refusal to host WikiLeaks' website. These moves were ostensibly due to pressure from the US government, but there's not been a lot of evidence to show that this 'pressure' was any more than a gentle nudge or request.

Paypal vice president Osama Beider, when asked why his company stopped processing WikiLeaks' payments, answered that the decision was influenced by a letter sent from the US State Department declaring WikiLeaks' actions to be illegal. Continued scrutiny revealed that the letter had actually been sent to WikiLeaks itself, not PayPal. Further, the State Department letter merely says that the leaked cables were provided in violation of US law, and doesn't directly deem WikiLeaks' actions to be illegal. So here you have PayPal stopping all processing of payments to WikiLeaks because of a letter that (a) wasn't sent to them, and (b) doesn't explicitly say that WikiLeaks is breaking the law!

I guess this shows how risky it is for anti-statist and anti-capitalist organisations to rely on corporate IT services and financial institutions, and why it's important to build non-profit, open-source alternatives. But what's cool is that people really fucking hated this stuff. Capital and the state publicly co-operating to limit WikiLeak's continued viability just stinks of corruption, even to the most casual of observers. The men at the top had to show their hand, and people got angry.

Notes on the WikiLeaks saga so far

by sci_fi

The most significant thing I learned from WikiLeaks was a strange feeling of empathy with rugby league fans and a deeply disturbing insight into rape culture. Here's this (suddenly) famous man who I believe has done some pretty great – even heroic – things. But he may also be a rapist. How do I assimilate that information?

As we saw, many WikiLeaks supporters and huge chunks of the global Left chose to believe that their hero, Julian Assange, was being falsely accused; the charges must be trumped-up, it's a set-up, the two women that brought the allegations are CIA plants in a 'honeytrap' operation (what a disgusting phrase, by the way); that Sweden's laws on sexual assault are nonsensical... and so on. I was stunned when a great many Assange supporters cited the fact that Miss A posted on Twitter that she was enjoying a party to support their arguments that the sexual assault allegations were nothing more than a smear campaign. She was enjoying the party, she can't have been raped! This is so excruciatingly similar to the arguments mounted in defence of sports-star rapists (the victim texted her friend to say she had a good time! She can't have been raped!) that it took my breath away.

There was a pretty large instance of cognitive dissonance for many of Assange's supporters – that is, the more evidence came to light suggesting that Assange might actually be a bit of an up-himself arsehole who doesn't respect women, the more they were convinced that he'd been painted that way by a conspiracy. A particularly ugly example of this was the logic used by many when the internet muck-rakers revealed that Miss A had once held a position as head of Gender Equity at Uppsala University and had published (but not written) a translated version of a joke article titled "A 7-step guide to revenge on ex-lovers". She's a radical feminist! She can't have been raped, she's just making it up because she just hates men!

But this all raises separate questions: why does WikiLeaks need a figurehead? Being the type of organisation it is, WikiLeaks has the potential to be an astonishingly empowering, non-hierarchical network of people working to undermine power and secrecy. Instead we have Assange's assertion that "I am the heart and soul of this organization, its founder, philosopher, spokesperson, original coder, organiser, financier and all the rest".

Why does support for WikiLeaks need to be the same thing as support for Julian Assange? I think Feminist Hulk put it best: "HULK GLAD WIKILEAKS EXIST. HULK SMASH RAPE SHAME. AT SAME TIME.". Even now the posters for Town

Of cuts, cops and kettles: the UK student movement

by Princess Mob

While public resistance looked to be stirring across Europe in reaction to austerity measures attacking public services and standards of living, the UK seemed quiet. Then, within a month, one mass demonstration ended with the invasion of Tory party headquarters and another involved an attack on a car carrying royalty. While this couldn't possibly have been planned (that the car carrying Charles and Camilla ended up so close to the demonstration was a stunning display of incompetence – or perhaps complacency – on the part of the security services), it was a powerful symbol of a widespread anger that went beyond the nominal issue of university fees and funding for education.

It was also only the tip of the iceberg. In between those two London protests there were demonstrations across the country on 24 and 30 November, including in many cities without much of a recent history of resistance, many of which broke police control. At least 15 universities were occupied at one time. Things were happening.

The political content of the student movement was mixed and often contradictory. Occupations released demands varying from calls for a public enquiry to radical questioning of the role of education under capitalism. There were reformist demands for smaller fee increases alongside broken windows. Some slogans were about education as a single issue while others made links between education cuts and other cuts. The point is that the 'student movement' was never just about students or student issues – it was about the possibility of fighting.

Much has been made in sections of the press about anarchist involvement in the student movement. Usually the two categories are held to be separate: 'anarchists' for example, are blamed for storming the Millbank tower while 'students' simply wanted to peacefully make their voices heard. It should go without saying that, for a start, many anarchists are students and are participating in the movement as such, and also that in instances of confrontation anarchists who participated did so as part of a much broader crowd. Other anarchists have provided logistical and practical support to demonstrations, such as distributing bust cards [cards containing information about rights when arrested. Eds.], encouraging people to mask up, helping with direct action training at occupations and so on.

The student demos managed to break out of kettles – something that other protests, including ones with larger and more organised groups of self-conscious militants – had never previously managed. There are various stories about how this happened on different occasions, but it seems that it often involved a collaboration between

anarchists, who were sometimes prepared with helmets and/or shields, and rowdy sections of the crowd who drew power, in part, from not being tied to a protest script or a particular way of behaving. The unpredictability of the crowd was at times stunning. A single group would go from standing and chanting around a small fire to throwing a flaming bin at police to running for blocks through traffic to sitting at an intersection singing 'we shall not be moved' to pelting a FIT team cameraman [Forward Intelligence Teams: police intelligence teams who overtly film 'anti-social' behavior. Eds] with bottles.

The National Union of Students (NUS) made itself irrelevant very early on when NUS president Aaron Porter denounced the actions of demonstrators who invaded and damaged Tory HQ. Their actions actually had widespread support so rather than isolating militant protesters, the NUS isolated itself. The NUS also failed to support the wave of student occupations. Their isolation was most visible at the demonstration on December 9, the day the higher education bill was passed in parliament. The official NUS protest was a 'candlelight vigil' that actually involved glowsticks (presumably because the rabble couldn't be trusted with actual fire), tucked away out of sight and attended by a few hundred people. Thousands of other demonstrators were either kettled in parliament square or, having escaped the kettle, were regrouping and beginning an uncontrollable run through the streets of central London. It was visible again in Manchester on January 29, when Porter chose not to speak to the demonstration after fleeing from a couple of hundred students who heckled him.

NUS's uselessness is arguably for the best. If Porter had been a more successful politician – if he hadn't misjudged the mood and had instead allowed more of a play of represented militancy – sections of the student movement might have been more easily recuperated into the 'proper channels'.

The passage of the bills regarding higher education and the Christmas holiday period combined to take the wind out of the sails, but it would be a mistake to think that things have returned to how they were before this wave of action.

Just recently Lambeth Town Hall (in south London) was stormed and briefly occupied by protesters during a council meeting about budget cuts. Glasgow University has been occupied since February 1, demanding, among other things, that "Glasgow University must become a democratic place of lifelong learning for all residents of Glasgow." Aberystwyth University went into occupation again on February 22, Manchester University on February

Intersex, Sex and/or Gender Diverse [ISGD] National Rally

May 11th 2011
1pm Canberra Parliament Lawn

organised by Still Fierce Sydney
ISGD Collective and Allied Organisations

Supported by Sex And Gender Education Australia, Australian Health and Education Centre, Australian Federal Greens Party, Australian Socialist Alliance, Femme Guild Sydney, Scarlet Alliance: Australian Sex Worker Association.

more details? check out:
stillfierce.wordpress.com
or find Still Fierce on Facebook

police (at which some comrades were arrested, but there was no victory in the streets). But at the time of writing, only the Glasgow occupation continues. The demonstrations don't seem to be growing, and the semester break has sapped a lot of people's enthusiasm and energy. Like the movement in Egypt, the question is: once you have united a vast section of society behind your dissatisfaction, once you have proven yourself capable of inflicting defeat on the state in its strongholds, one you have constituted yourself as a major social power, what do you do? There are a couple of possible answers.

One would be to try and continue doing more of the same. If the government makes serious missteps, this could re-ignite the initial outrage that sacked the Tory offices. A prolonged shut-down of London, coupled with action in other cities, and public-sector strikes would pose a serious problem for the government. David Cameron wouldn't last long, and even the Conservative party would be hard-pressed to survive such a crisis of authority. Climate camp 2009 showed the possibility of blockading tactics in the capital, though it inadvertently demonstrated that pure nonviolence is insufficient to maintain it. However, as Greece and Egypt have shown, changing the government without changing the structures of power accomplishes little. Every time a government goes down, unless there is a clearly advanced alternative to its possibilities being demanded by the people, the next government will propose the same ones. Vanguardism seems attractive. But we definitely tried that before. Most of our disputes with our fellow activists were over the correct definition of ideology, which is supposed to help you decide what to do. In any event, it mistakes the way resistance has formed: from a variety of subject positions, unifying in a way that overcomes rivalries, but does not eliminate their differences. So the development of a new model for education cannot take place within the confines of a central committee. Nor, beyond the most general outlines, in this article (and I have already addressed some of the possibilities in my previous work in Melbourne Black, which it would be redundant to repeat here for precisely these reasons). The best possibilities are offered by widening the movement to include lecturers dissatisfied with the arrogant and unreachable power structures of the neoliberal university; new tactics need to be innovated that not only occupy the university, but claim it for anti-productivity (radical teach-ins, repurposing infrastructure, etc); and discussions need to touch upon issues beyond tuition including admissions, governance, and curriculum. There is no pressure for anyone to come up with the one solution that everyone will rally behind due to the viral nature of the movement. Occupations have not spread across the country by some centralised plan. A lot of tactics get tried, and some get imitated. What is needed now is experimentation. If the students of Britain don't remake the university, the ruling class will remake it for them.

24 and Royal Holloway in London on February 25, to create what's being called "Anti-Cuts Space London." Local anti-cuts groups are growing and developing.

A significant action focus now is on the so-called tax-dodger companies. A number of corporations have been identified as having avoided paying tax, and these shops and banks have been occupied and shut down in both organised decentralised days of action and as part of bigger demos. For example, Topshop and Vodafone stores were vandalised during the breakaway demo in London on December 9. (Topshop has been a particular focus because its boss was chosen to lead a review of government spending while the company owner, his wife, lives in a tax haven.)

On the positive side, this trend can be seen as an attempt to break the illusion that 'we're all in this together,' as the Tory party famously said. Direct comparisons make it clear that there actually is the money to fund services for working-class people: it's just that the rich are keeping it (in order to stay rich). On the other hand, it's a very crude anti-capitalism and a very activist search for 'targets'. It reminds me of how, during the wave of anti-globalisation/ anti-capitalist protests particular corporations – McDonalds, for example, or Nike – became symbols of the evils of capitalism as if all the others were all right. Even more worryingly, the focus on tax evading can be interpreted as simply a call to the state to regulate things better, using its existing laws (or '

'fairer' interpretations of the laws) – as if this would actually make things better.

The next big event is a march in London on March 26, called for by the TUC (the peak Trade Union organisation.) This is the first major thing the trade union movement has organised against the cuts. It was almost certainly motivated to organise something by the wave of unrest that came from the students, which led to calls for them to do something. The TUC have set up a call in centre in conjunction with the Metropolitan police to co-ordinate information from stewards. This is despite the widespread criticisms of police violence towards student demonstrators, which put at least one student in hospital with life-threatening brain injuries. This looks set to be the first large event since December: it will be interesting to see whether the TUC and police manage to contain it as a passive demonstration. Even more importantly, it will be interesting to see if attempts to break from this control are defined to small, already defined radical groups, or if, as during earlier student demonstrations, defiance is widespread.

Revolts in Britain, as seen from North of the Forth.

By Seamus

This is an article of the British student revolts, but it does not focus on London. While not wishing to underscore the amazing achievement of smashing the rich kids' clubhouse, after they declared their intention to rob us all (while eliminating tax on multinational companies), there is another perspective to offer on the revolts, from outside the metropolis. I was a student activist in Scotland from 2005-2008. Our mental geographies certainly included London, but we also had to develop an intricate map of the Scottish activist networks. In this article, I try to look at how these networks form, and how they laid the basis for the current struggle in Scotland. I draw on my own learning from university, as well as valuable discussions with members of the St Andrews anti-cuts group. I'm indebted to them all.

St Andrews is an elite university in Fife, the scene of parts of MacBeth and some good heretic-burnings during the Reformation. It's where the Ponce William met his well-styled bride (I assumed for ages that she was from Manhattan... globalisation is dizzying). It shouldn't be easy to have an elite university in Scotland, but it is. Scotland, per capita, is far poorer than England. It has an independent parliament which oversees education (among other matters), and gives full subsidies to Scottish students at Scottish universities. But it does this by giving each university a set subsidy for a set number of Scottish students, and allowing it to recruit from outside Scotland however it likes, charging whatever it likes. EU students carry EU subsidies, English students bring some subsidy and the notorious "top-up fees." International (non-EU) students bring in planeloads of tuition (conceivably boatloads, if they're Norwegian, but it would be a small boat). Therefore, universities can not only cherry-pick amongst the "best and brightest" (most middle-class) of Scottish students, but they can impose other costs on students which deny the poor access to education. What you end up with is a system of elite universities for the globalised bourgeoisie and the rest for the mass of middle- to lower-class students; and a growing proportion of school leavers who go into trades, employment, or unemployment. We organised a group (and a not-too-successful electoral putsch in the Student Union) that campaigned against the growing cost of accommodation, from which the university was making a mint but which was dissuading a lot of people from attending St Andrews, even if they were academically prepared to. My perception of the left in Scotland was of a fairly fractured and sectarian affair. We fought against the recalcitrant unions, squabbled against greens, shook our heads at eco-anarchists (though they were right fun), argued with Trotskyists, and sneered at most people that wore suits. It all seemed terribly unimportant, and in a lot of ways it was. I don't know how much effect we actually had on university policy (their bulldozing of cheap residences continues, and the hotels for golf players are going up). At the time, we were told that we would be gone in a few years, so our opinions didn't matter. The university continues to use this explanation for a planned fee hike against part-time (read: working) students.

My main experience outside "the bubble" of the university was the anti-war movement. (apart from some summit hopping, which is what it is). We organised contingents to travel to some of the big demos in London, but as I have mentioned we had a Scottish focus. We joined up with other groups in Fife, or students from Edinburgh or Perth, to rent the buses down. But we attended even more demos within Edinburgh or Glasgow. The anti-war movement was closely linked to action against the Trident nuclear missile submarines, which moored on Scotland's west coast, and was heavily influenced by anarchist and Quaker trends. With its £75 billion (plus) price tag, it made the connection between Britain's compliance in the American imperial project and attacks on the wellbeing of British people in a crumbling relic of a post-industrial welfare society. The war had a unifying effect, bringing together people from within and without the university; different generations; different political tendencies. This unity became stronger the more the war became identified as an attack on the general wellbeing. People had very different motivations about what they would fight for, but everyone was united on self-defense. But, of course, establishing those links didn't stop the war. And if we had, the "peace" we would have achieved would have been little more than a period of re-armament before the next war. And demonstrations at the start of the war were never matched; by 2008 it was getting easy to be blasé about the marches. We were coming up against the limits of anti-war activism, and we couldn't figure out a way of going beyond them.

The student movement in Britain today seems to be in a similar situation. Since London, anti-cuts groups and occupations have sprung up across the U.K. In Scotland, occupations hit the universities of St Andrews, Glasgow, and Edinburgh. There have been demonstrations in Edinburgh, with some militant action against the